

Message Text

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R 060200Z FEB 76

FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 022354

EXDIS FOR AMBASSADOR

FOLLOWING REPEAT STATE 022354 ACTION ADDIS ABABA INFO ASMARA
DAMASCUS 29 JAN

QUOTE

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 022354

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS:PINS PFOR SY ET US

SUBJECT: EPMG REACTION TO MEETING WITH PLF LEADER OSMAN
SABBE

REFS: A) ADDIS ABABA 0968; B) STATE 283548; DEC. 2, 1975

1. DEPT COMMENDS EMBASSY'S HANDLING OF THIS SENSITIVE
SUBJECT WITH MOFA OFFICIALS. WE AGREE WITH EMBASSY'S
ANALYSIS OF REASONS IMPELLING MOFA TO REACT SO PROMPTLY
TO THIS PRESENTATION.

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2. CHARGE (OR AMBASSADOR UPON HIS RETURN) MAY IF DEEMED

USEFUL SEEK APPOINTMENT WITH APPROPRIATE LEVEL MOFA TO MAKE FOLLOWING POINTS "ON INSTRUCTIONS FROM DEPT":

(A) AS IS WELL BORNE OUT BY OUR ACTIONS SINCE NEW GOVERNMENT CAME TO POWER, FRIENDLY USG ATTITUDES AND POLICY TOWARD EPMG REMAIN UNCHANGED.

(B) AS EMBASSY HAS INFORMED EPMG ON VARIOUS OCCASIONS, WELL KNOWN AND FIRMLY ESTABLISHED U.S. POLICY IS NOT TO NEGOTIATE WITH TERRORISTS OR KIDNAPPERS OF U.S. CITIZENS. PURPOSE OF MEETING OF REPRESENTATIVE OF EMBASSY DAMASCUS WITH OSMAN SABBE WAS SOLELY TO INQUIRE ABOUT WELFARE OF

TWO AMERICAN HOSTAGES KNOWN TO BE HELD BY PLF AND TO URGE THEIR PROMPT AND UNCONDITIONAL RELEASE. QUESTION OF NEGOTIATION WITH, RECOGNITION OF, OR CHANGED POLICY TOWARD ERITREAN INSURGENTS NOT INVOLVED.

(C) IN ELABORATION OF (B) ABOVE, EMBASSY SHOULD MAKE POINT THAT CAMPBELL AND HARRELL HAVE NOW BEEN HELD CAPTIVE FOR OVER SIX MONTHS. AS PERIOD OF CAPTIVITY DRAGS ON, THERE IS UNDERSTANDABLY INCREASING CONCERN ON PART USG, U.S. CONGRESS, U.S. PUBLIC AND ESPECIALLY FAMILIES OF INDIVIDUAL HOSTAGES FOR THEIR WELFARE AND SAFE RETURN. USG LOOKS TO HOST GOVERNMENT (IN THIS CASE EPMG) AS THE FUNDAMENTALLY RESPONSIBLE PARTY UNDER TRADITIONAL INTERNATIONAL LAW FOR THE PROTECTION OF U.S. CITIZENS ABROAD, INCLUDING SAFE RELEASE OF AMERICAN HOSTAGES. AT SAME TIME, USG ALSO HAS LEGAL AND MORAL RESPONSIBILITY TO EXERT ALL APPROPRIATE EFFORTS FOR THE SAFETY OF ITS CITIZENS ABROAD, AGAIN INCLUDING SAFE RELEASE OF AMERICAN HOSTAGES. WE APPRECIATE SOME OF PROBLEMS CONFRONTING EPMG WHICH MAKE IT DIFFICULT FOR IT EFFECTIVELY TO DISCHARGE ITS RESPONSIBILITY FOR RELEASE OF THREE AMERICANS STILL HELD BY ERITREAN INSURGENTS AND SINCE EPMG HAS BEEN UNABLE TO SECURE RELEASE OF CAPTIVES, IT HAS BEEN RESPONSIBILITY OF USG TO TAKE APPROPRIATE ACTION OF ITS OWN, BY ESTABLISHING DIRECT CONTACT WITH ABDUCTORS TO DISCUSS CERTAIN, STRICTLY LIMITED MATTERS WITH THEM. IT IS OUR PRACTICE TO KEEP HOST GOVERNMENT FULLY APPRISED OF CONFIDENTIAL

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SUCH DISCUSSIONS, AS WE HAVE DONE WITH EPMG IN THIS CASE AND AS WAS THE CASE WITH ELF CONTACT.

(D) DEPT DOES NOT INTEND TO TAKE ANY INITIATIVE TO PUBLICIZE FACT DAMASCUS MEETING WAS HELD WITH SABBE. HOWEVER, WE WILL CONFIRM THAT MEETING WAS HELD IF PRESS OBTAINS INFORMATION FROM OTHER SOURCES AND ASKS DEPT SPOKESMAN FOR CONFIRMATION. AS YET, MATTER HAS NOT

ARISEN. WE WILL ALSO STATE, IF QUESTION RAISED, THAT
MEETING DOES NOT IN ANY WAY AFFECT OUR PRESENT POLICY
OF NON-RECOGNITION OF ERITREAN INDEPENDENCE MOVEMENTS. KISSINGER
UNQUOTE KISSINGER

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